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New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 47 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The Acting President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representatives of Burundi and Namibia have requested to participate in the debate on this item.

Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed today at noon, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of Burundi and Namibia in the list of speakers?

There is no objection. Burundi and Namibia are therefore included in the list of speakers.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Almost two years have gone by since resolution 48/26 established the Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the functioning of the Security Council. That Group, presided over by the President of the General Assembly and wisely guided by Ambassadors Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, has worked intensively this year.

We are especially grateful for the distribution to the General Assembly of the compendium of documents and observations of the Vice-Chairmen. The documents, referred to as clusters I and II, served as a well-ordered basis for channelling our recent discussions and for giving structure to the Working Group's final report.

The Argentine delegation, which participated actively in the meetings held this year, submitted to the Working Group an "evolving" document intended to stimulate consideration of the item; at the suggestion of a number of delegations it was annexed to the compendium contained in document A/49/965. Our presentation related to what was graphically called the "cascade effect" of the status of permanent membership of the Security Council. The single, modest, intention of our document was to sound a warning concerning the profound collateral effects on the entire United Nations system of the possible expansion of the number of permanent members. Owing to its importance, this matter is worth pondering.

We believe that an expansion of the permanent membership should not merely install new chairs in the Security Council Chamber, but should go much further. The document draws attention to the many other related decisions to which we must also give much thought. One of the most important of these is without question expansion of the membership of the International Court of Justice. Each of the permanent members of the Security Council has to date always had a member on the Hague Court, even though there is no provision to that effect in the Statue of the Court.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Reform of the Security Council, the paramount organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, does not have institutional implications only; it also poses a broad challenge that must be addressed with much care and wisdom, without haste and with great caution. The question is too important for us to take decisions lightly and run the risk of error.

As my Foreign Minister recently told the General Assembly, the basic element of the reform is the need to safeguard and improve the efficiency and flexibility of the work of the Security Council. Given the necessary consensus, any expansion of the Security Council must be very cautious, restrained and limited. In our view, such an expansion could be based on a new, imaginative mechanism aimed at achieving greater representativity, which through rotation formulas would make possible more frequent inclusion on the Council of countries with the greatest desire to serve the maintenance of international peace and security, without — and I lay particular emphasis on this — resulting in arbitrary exclusions and the concomitant establishment of new privileges that would further undermine equity.

In that connection we have heard this year a number of innovative proposals that through rotation would ensure a more frequent presence in the Council of a larger number of States. Such a scheme would also permit easier access to the Council by countries that must now wait many long years before they can aspire to a seat on the Security Council.

In our view it is vital to take account of the differences between the situation in 1945, which led to the existence of permanent seats on the Security Council, and the current international situation. In today's far more transparent, open and democratic world, we must favour solutions that are — and I stress this — less rigid and less authoritarian in order to adapt the Security Council to our times.

We must be particularly careful when we speak of the notion of regional representation, which is strictly speaking alien to the Charter of the United Nations. Future generations could question the capricious criterion of regionally based representativity, which some in this Organization have recently set forth with respect to reform of the Security Council. Each geographical region has its own characteristics and idiosyncrasies. We therefore believe that it could be arbitrary to try to establish a single and universal set of new parameters for representation, to be applicable to all continents.

We must ask the question of whether we still possess the momentum we thought existed to motivate in-depth reform of the Security Council. In the judgement of my delegation, the specific matter of expansion of the permanent membership does not seem to enjoy the minimum consensus necessary to put it into practice. That momentum will exist, or will return, when, after calm and careful thought we begin to consider conclusions and debate the options for an equitable solution of the question before us. We must not be obsessed with the idea of the "propitious moment", or the "challenge imposed upon us" by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. There must be no artificial deadlines: reform of the Security Council is too important and too complicated, and has consequences that are too serious for the international community.

We must recognize, on the other hand, that there has lately been considerable progress in the transparency and openness of the work of the Council. The current predictable and well-organized meetings between Council members and troop-contributing countries surely constitute a most significant area of progress in the sphere of peace-keeping operations. Yet this procedure, originally proposed by New Zealand and Argentina, should be subject to ongoing review, as we believe it could be improved. Specifically, we think that the format of this mechanism should be formalized in deference to the responsibility of troop contributors to their own societies, including their Governments and their parliaments.

With respect to transparency, there is great room for improvement in the procedures of the Security Council. Last year, the French delegation proposed more frequent formal meetings, an idea noted by the Council through a presidential statement. And during Argentina's presidency, in January, 10 months ago, the Council considered the paper of the Secretary-General on a Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" in a formal meeting, before discussing it in informal meetings. Yet we have not repeated that very rich experience.

During its presidency Argentina also held, for the first time, daily briefings for delegations not members of the Security Council on the work of the Council, including reports on what had taken place in informal consultations.

All of this reflects the importance that the Argentine Republic attaches to transparency and openness in the work of the Security Council. It also indicates the role

that non-permanent members of the Council can play in promoting change that will strengthen the legitimacy and representativity of the Security Council *vis-à-vis* the other members of the United Nations.

Mr. Owada (Japan): The fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, coming as it did in the midst of the structural changes that are taking place in the world in the wake of the end of the cold war, has offered us a golden opportunity for sober reflection upon the role of the United Nations in the contemporary international system. The need to strengthen the Organization and to improve its functioning as the centre of action for the peace and stability of the world is keenly felt by a great number of the States that constitute the United Nations.

One focal point of our attention in this regard, needless to say, is the problem of how to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council as the principal United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of peace and security. Thus, in their statements at the recent Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, as well as in the Assembly's general debate at the present session, an overwhelming majority of Member States referred to the need to reform the Security Council.

Those statements were testimony to our enormous expectations with respect to the role to be played by the United Nations in the new world that is now emerging. It is essential that we seize the momentum that has thus been generated, so that we may make tangible progress towards genuine reform during this session of the General Assembly.

Japan has enunciated its basic position on Security Council reform in various forums of this Organization, in particular in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In Japan's view, the primary objective of our exercise should be to strengthen the functioning of the Council by enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness. In order to attain this objective, the reform package should include the following elements: first, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the Council, it seems essential that a limited increase in its permanent membership should be implemented by the inclusion of countries which have both the capacity and the willingness to assume global responsibilities for world peace and stability.

On this score, many Member States have expressed their support for the addition of specific countries, including my own, as permanent members. In addition, the expanded permanent membership might also include those countries from the developing regions of the world which meet the qualifications I have mentioned, if Member States generally can agree on their selection.

Secondly, in view of the dramatically expanded membership of the United Nations as a whole, it is necessary to enhance the representativeness of the Security Council by adding an appropriate number of non-permanent seats. At the same time, my delegation believes that in carrying out this task a balance between the need for enhanced legitimacy and the need for increased effectiveness must be struck. In the light of this consideration, the total membership of an expanded Security Council, which should include an increase in both permanent and non-permanent seats, would have to be kept in the low twenties.

Thirdly, in considering the expansion of the Security Council, the geographical imbalance that exists now in the membership of the Council as a whole should be redressed, with particular attention given to the representation of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this connection, my country has stated on a number of occasions that Japan, with the endorsement of many countries, is prepared to discharge its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council in accordance with its basic philosophy regarding international contributions, including the non-resort to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution.

Finally, it goes without saying that the reform should also address the problem of how to improve the Council's working methods, including enhancement of the transparency of its work. Much progress towards improvement is already under way on this score, but the final outcome should be integrated in the form of a single comprehensive package which would cover both of the two aspects of the reform, namely the expansion of the Council and the improvement of its working methods.

At the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Prime Minister of Japan, Tomiichi Murayama, emphasized that on this issue of the reform of the Security Council it is now time for action. Japan believes that Member States should now

proceed to work expeditiously to reach agreement on a broad framework of reform by the end of the current session of the General Assembly in September 1996.

As we proceed in the weeks and months ahead on this path of seeking agreement on the specific modalities of the reform of the Security Council, it is the considered view of my delegation that we should keep two dimensions of our work in mind.

The first dimension relates to the nature of the exercise in the Working Group at this juncture in its work. In the course of our discussion so far we have already covered a lot of ground. General agreement seems to have been achieved on the need to expand the membership of the Council as well as to further improve its working methods. Furthermore, a number of concrete proposals and suggestions have been put on the table. Different ideas have been floated on ways to overcome conflicting interests and practical difficulties that stand in the way of finding an acceptable formula on a number of issues. Building on that progress, my delegation is convinced that it is high time we intensified our efforts to reach agreement on a concrete formula for expanding the Security Council membership by entering into the negotiating stage for arriving at an overall package. It is important to avoid the repetition of our past discussions. While trying to promote a convergence of views, we should now proceed to negotiate a concrete reform package.

The second dimension of our task relates to the problem of what working method should be employed in the Open-Ended Working Group. I should like to suggest that the Working Group pursue its activities in a more efficient manner. For example, one avenue to explore in this respect would be the possibility of holding informal consultations more frequently, while maintaining the transparency of the Working Group's work. Again, and still with a view to facilitating agreement, it might be useful to consider the institution of a series of intensive negotiating sessions in which the participation of high-level representatives from the various capitals could inject an element of each country's political judgement at the highest level. With a view to exploring various new and innovative ideas to expedite the process in which we have been engaged for the past two years, the Bureau should commence in the course of this session a process of informal consultations to identify the most effective ways to take our work a step further and bring us to a new level of genuine negotiations while building on our past achievements.

Clearly, the reform of the Security Council is one of the most urgent tasks we must achieve if we are seriously determined to strengthen the United Nations. Should Member States fail to reach concrete agreement on this all-important task in the near future the credibility of the Organization would be severely undermined. My delegation feels very strongly that each and every Member State should recognize our collective responsibility to sustain and reinforce the Organization, which is so indispensable for the maintenance of peace and stability in the present-day world. To meet this collective responsibility we all must redouble our efforts to realize a genuine reform, with commitment and in partnership. The future of the United Nations depends on our efforts.

Ms. Menon (Singapore): Allow me to begin by thanking His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, for his guidance during that session as Chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. I should like to assure the President of the present session of our full cooperation as he now assumes this role.

We congratulate Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand on their sterling work as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. In particular, we thank them for guiding us in the preparation of the Working Group's report contained in document A/49/47 and of its compendium contained in document A/49/965. Those documents have accurately captured the richness and range of our exchanges. They form useful references to the views of Member States and to the variety of concrete proposals that have been advanced.

As the Working Group begins its third year of work it is appropriate to take stock of our progress and see how we proceed from here. The pace of work in the Working Group has occasioned some comment, not all favourable. But, in my delegation's view, the process of the last two years has been both necessary and fruitful.

First, the Working Group process has clarified many of the complex and interlinked issues. Secondly, specific proposals on how to reform the Security Council have emerged and are now on the table for further discussion. Thirdly, the positions of many Member States have risen closer to the surface and are now more defined. Fourthly,

in my delegation's statement on this item last year we urged that there must be political will and that priority must be given to this issue in capitals in order to push ahead. If the statements at the Special Commemorative Meeting last month are any guide, the attention of our leaders and capitals has been engaged. At least, we hope so.

In other words, the exercise has shifted away from generalities and is entering a substantive stage of negotiations. The next stage in the work of the Working Group is therefore both crucial and delicate.

It is clearly important to maintain and enhance our forward momentum to build on the progress we have forged. At the same time, precisely because we are now focused on specific and substantive issues and national positions are engaged, it is essential to proceed with some deliberation. A misstep at this stage could cripple the process.

How do we take account of the different sensitivities without paralysing the discussion? We must recognize the political reality of differing opinions while preserving the climate of dialogue and cooperation that we have so far enjoyed, and move forward. We need political vision, coupled with circumspection, finesse and sensitivity. This will not be easy, but it is not impossible. To achieve it, we must first acknowledge the challenge.

This is why my delegation has consistently advocated a criteria-based approach to Security Council reform. We have suggested some criteria, which have been incorporated into the compendium in document A/49/965. The specific criteria that we have suggested are obviously neither definitive nor exhaustive. Like everything else, they are open for discussion. The more important point my delegation wishes to emphasize is methodological. We believe that a criteria-based approach is the most politically neutral means of advancing this important issue.

Whatever the approach adopted, my delegation pledges to do its best to support the Working Group actively. We intend to remain engaged in and to contribute constructively to the Working Group and the others. Security Council reform is an important and integral component of the entire package of forward-looking reforms needed to strengthen the United Nations and to prepare it for the challenges of the next century.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly has been meeting for two years. Some may find the progress achieved slow, but the complexity and importance of its mandate justify its being so.

As is natural and logical, areas of agreement and of disagreement have taken shape throughout the debates. There appears to be general support for an increase in the membership of the Security Council. The conclusions of the most recent report of the Working Group also contained a set of principles and concepts that should provide the *raison d'être* and objective of the reform.

In addition to the principles of sovereign equality, equitable geograp..ical distribution and contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other objectives of the Organization, the report reflects the widespread desire for greater transparency, legitimacy, effectiveness, efficiency and democracy in the Security Council.

What should be the appropriate number of additional members? Which of the categories could be expanded? The Working Group still has no common response to these questions. How will the principles and concepts we have been discussing so far be defined? What is the appropriate combination of criteria for attaining the shared objectives we are pursuing? What, in short, are the ways to and conditions for a viable reform that will be acceptable to all?

All Member States have benefited from the debate in the Working Group. We have all learned something. We have adjusted our original views of the problems and changed our approaches, but we have also reaffirmed our convictions on various aspects of the reform.

Mexico remains profoundly convinced that it is imperative not to repeat the mistakes of 1945. We have been told, as the report states, that important changes are taking place in international relations. The list of these changes could be endless; some of them relate to the issue now before us, while others do not. For us, the question is whether it can be claimed that the circumstances that made it possible in San Francisco for five countries to have a privileged position in our Organization exist today. Interdependence, globalization and shared responsibility are concepts that lead us directly to the answer that they do not.

Can we claim that the principle of sovereign equality will be strengthened by granting privileges and prerogatives to other countries? We do not understand

how, by introducing new inequalities, we are going to make fully applicable this essential principle of relations between States, which, moreover, we solemnly reaffirmed on 24 October last.

By introducing new discriminatory elements will we be able to improve the representativeness and legitimacy of the Council's actions? Yes, more members are needed, but without new imbalances. Legitimacy will be fully achieved through decisions that are faithful to the principles of the Charter and the norms of international law. Thus will the moral authority and credibility of the Council take firm root.

It has been said that five new permanent members could be added to the Security Council. Explicitly or implicitly, this is the figure most often mentioned. According to these proposals, of the 10 permanent members that the Security Council would eventually have, 4 would come from the Group of Western European and Other States, 3 from Asia, 1 from Eastern Europe, 1 from Africa and 1 from Latin America and the Caribbean. Can anyone claim that this distribution genuinely reflects the objective of equitable geographical representation?

Moreover, if it is a question of geographical representation, can we contemplate representation that does not correspond to the will and enjoy the consent of the geographical region that is supposed to be represented? In any event, the regional groups will have to play an essential role in decisions of this kind.

In a Security Council with new permanent members, each enjoying privileges and prerogatives, can anyone say with certainty that the process of consultation, coordination and decision-making will be more effective and more efficient? How will this contribute to transparency?

With regard to the veto, can we unhesitatingly assert that by inalterably maintaining this privilege and, moreover, by extending it to other States we are making progress towards the democratization of the United Nations? Since 1945, Mexico has maintained that the veto is an anti-democratic institution. It should not be forgotten that in San Francisco there was no general agreement in this regard. Paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the Charter was adopted by a vote of 30 in favour and 2 against, with 15 abstentions. None of us is unaware that this provision was put forward as a *sine qua non* condition for the establishment of our Organization in circumstances that, as I have already said, no longer exist.

Just as in 1945, 50 years later there is still no agreement — witness the countless proposals put forward aimed at limiting the veto. We ourselves have said that it should be confined to issues under Chapter VII of the Charter and that two negative votes by permanent members should be required to block a decision. Those measures would indeed move us towards greater democracy in the United Nations.

In the draft resolution recommended by the Working Group, we have agreed to work towards general agreement. Moreover, from the legal standpoint, we must draw up a blueprint for reform that enjoys the support of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly — 124 States — and that, in addition, is ratified, in accordance with their respective constitutional processes, by two thirds of the Member States, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. Does the reality of Article 108 not compel us to be objective and realistic?

Mr. Reyn (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

All these considerations have guided Mexico's participation in the discussions on this subject, and on this basis the Government of Mexico submitted in April 1995 a proposal for increasing the number of members of the Security Council. The main elements of that proposal are the following: first, the membership of the Security Council would increase from 15 to 20 countries; secondly, there would be no increase in the number of permanent members, because, in our view, the five stipulated in the San Francisco Charter are more than enough; thirdly, two Member States would alternate, every two years, in occupying a non-permanent seat, in recognition of the role they play in the Organization; fourthly, there would be one additional seat for Africa, one for Asia and one for Latin America and the Caribbean, while another seat would be rotated every two years between Eastern and Western European countries; and, fifthly, the competence of the regional groups in considering and deciding on the allocation of the seats assigned to their respective regions would be strengthened.

That is the essence of our proposal. We are convinced that it is realistic, objective and, above all, viable.

As for the future, Mexico supports the Working Group's decision to continue its work. On the basis of the ideas we have expressed, we are aware that imposing

solutions is not the answer. Work will have to continue and efforts will have to be redoubled to make progress towards a convergence and unanimity of views. Mexico is convinced that with tenacity and patience, not haste, we will move ahead in shaping the reform of the organ on which we, the Member States, have conferred the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for assuming, as did his predecessor, the chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. The two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group who are assisting him in that task — you, Mr. Acting President, whose forthcoming departure we shall regret, and, of course, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland — accomplished remarkable work during the forty-ninth session, for which we are grateful.

The Working Group did considerable work during the forty-ninth session. The publication of a compendium report including, *inter alia*, the personal observations and assessment of the Vice-Chairmen, as well as various documents presented by Member States, will stimulate our thinking and help us focus our work.

As we have stated in the past, Canada attaches great importance to the effectiveness, credibility and legitimacy of the Council. Some of the questions in this regard fall under the heading of "other matters related to the Security Council", as contained in cluster II of the Working Group's agenda. These questions are fundamental for the Council to be able to fulfil its Charter mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security, and progress in this field should not be dependent upon the rest of the work done in the Working Group.

We are pleased with the advances achieved by the Council in increasing the transparency of its work, as well as its consultations with non-members of the Council, especially with troop-contributing countries. We strongly encourage the Council to pursue this path, and we again urge that the various measures adopted by the Council in recent months, notably with regard to consultations with troop-contributing countries, be institutionalized.

(spoke in English)

In this connection, the report of the Government of Canada on a rapid-reaction capability for the United Nations, presented to the General Assembly last September, contains concrete recommendations, some of which deserve discussion in the Working Group. Member States will be more disposed to furnish troops to the United Nations when they are in a position to participate in the discussions on the definition, implementation and renewal of mandates, as well as on the political direction of operations at critical moments in their existence.

We are alluding in particular to the creation of a troop-contributors committee for each operation, which could be set up when contributors are approached on the question of participation, even before the formal approval of an operation by the Council, in order to ensure a rapid United Nations reaction. This idea is in fact mentioned in paragraph 25 of the Vice-Chairmen's document. The Security Council would thus have the assurance that potential troop contributors took a favourable view of the proposed operation.

Before concluding my remarks on this theme, I would like to add an observation on the effectiveness and credibility of the Council, which have, unfortunately, been eroded by the Council's difficulties in the implementation of certain decisions. We believe the Council, and especially its permanent members, needs to pay closer attention to the nature and scope of its decisions and to the material and financial resources and political support provided to the United Nations. This would go a long way towards restoring the credibility which is essential to the Council's effective fulfilment of its important responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Permit me now to turn to the question of enlargement of the Council.

After two years of discussions, important differences continue to exist on key issues, as the Working Group's report correctly indicates. Paramount among these issues is the addition of new permanent members. From a careful reading the of Vice-Chairmen's document, this seems to have become more, rather than less, problematic, however desirable it may be to respond to several countries' understandable aspirations to such a status. It seems difficult not to conclude that the addition of new permanent members faces significant hurdles in the short run, and even more so when the Working

Group has examined only in preliminary fashion the thorny question of extending the power of veto to possible new permanent members.

Nevertheless, since the Group began its work, Canada has indicated that it is open to examining all proposals regarding enlargement, whether for new members, new categories or, indeed, the composition of regional groups. A year ago in the debate on this subject, my predecessor remarked,

> "We think that the concept of semi-permanent seats, to be shared for two-year periods by two or more countries, is particularly interesting and warrants further exploration. The creation of such a category would have the double advantage of allowing countries that more fully meet the requirements of Article 23 of the Charter to sit more frequently on the Council and of lessening the number of candidates for non-permanent member status." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 30th meeting, p. 19)*

This idea may not respond fully to all concerns, but we believe it continues to merit further exploration as part of our search for a solution likely to attract widespread support.

During his statement in the general debate this year, our Foreign Minister, the Honourable André Ouellet, stated that it would be useful to initiate a fuller reflection on what constitutes a contribution by Member States to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, as set out in Article 23. Several Member States have given some idea of what they have in mind. For our part, Canada considers that respect for the Charter, participation in peace-keeping operations, payment in full, on time and without any conditions of regular and peace-keeping budget assessments, the commitment of States to arms control and disarmament, recourse to the peaceful settlement of disputes, humanitarian assistance, economic and social development assistance, respect for human rights, and promotion of civil society, must be among the key determining considerations in this regard. As Minister Ouellet said, an understanding among Member States along these lines would help in the selection of non-permanent members, whether on the existing basis or on a modified basis. We look forward to hearing views from many others on these aspects when discussions resume in the Working Group.

Secondly, as the Charter indicates, account should also be taken of equitable geographic distribution.

I wish to assure the President and all other participants of Canada's full and active cooperation once the work of the Group begins in January.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: First of all, I should like to express my delegation's gratitude to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their steadfast efforts in presiding jointly over the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

During the past year, the Working Group has covered considerable ground. It held a large number of meetings, and its intensive work produced a large number of contributions and proposals from Member States. One cannot but welcome the submission for the first time of a wide-ranging and substantive report from the Working Group, together with a compendium of the documents used and the views and proposals submitted. The Working Group now has solid and varied documentation enabling it to continue its work during the current session, a session that marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. The publication of the report also means that academicians and the public now have documentation enabling them to keep abreast of this important question and to offer their ideas, thereby enriching the debate on expanding the Security Council.

It is clear, in the light of the documentation contained in the report, that the Working Group has made greater progress on the issues of cluster II, which is to say on matters not related to the expansion of the Security Council, such as transparency in the work of the Council and improvements in its methods of work. In connection with transparency and effectiveness, it must be noted that since 1993, on the initiative of the members of the Security Council themselves, some progress has been made in making it easier for all States Members of the Organization to follow the work of the Council and, as appropriate, its consultations, through practical arrangements that should be continually improved and brought up to date. Since the gradual implementation of these arrangements concerning transparency in the work of the Council, they have proved useful and beneficial, both for members of the Council and for the other States Members of the Organization. My delegation therefore

believes that progress can and should continue to be made on cluster II questions independently of developments in connection with cluster I.

However, the same cannot be said with regard to cluster I, whose main subject is the increase in the membership of the Security Council. Despite the great wealth of ideas, suggestions and even concrete formulas submitted in the past year, it must be admitted that profound differences persist between members of the Working Group. This should not be a source of discouragement; on the contrary, it should stir the Group to redouble its efforts to continue moving ahead in the search for a consensus solution acceptable to all Members of the United Nations. On a subject that is so vitally important for the future of the Organization, the search for consensus is essential.

There is consensus on the principle of expanding the Council, but not on its total membership or its composition. Spain favours a moderate increase in the number of members of the Council to a total of 21 to 25 members. This would make it possible to improve the representativeness of the Council by making it more balanced and democratic, while at the same time maintaining a composition consistent with the requirements of efficiency and speed in deliberation and decision-making.

Spain believes the increase should incorporate a system providing for a more frequent presence in the Council of States with weight and influence in international relations and with the ability and desire to make a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the United Nations, in accordance with Article 23 of the Charter. In this connection, special reference should be made, *inter alia*, to Member States' contributions of troops and other personnel to peace-keeping operations.

This would not mean creating a new category of members of the Security Council, since the States enjoying a more frequent presence would periodically be subject to election by the General Assembly, as are the other non-permanent members of the Council, so that the democratic legitimacy of such members of the Council would always be duly guaranteed.

Any expansion of the Security Council will inevitably mean a change in the majority required for decision-making. On the basis of the provisions of Article 27 of the Charter, a distinction in this respect could be drawn between three types of decisions: first, decisions on procedural matters; secondly, decisions relating to substantive issues outside the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter, which are essentially questions relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes; and, finally, decisions within the framework of Chapter VII, which entail recourse to coercive measures.

Decisions in each of these categories would require a different majority: the more important the decision to be taken, the greater the required majority. Thus, the so-called right of veto of the permanent members would be applicable only in the third category of decisions, those adopted within the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter.

My delegation believes that the Working Group should continue its deliberations during this fiftieth session and, on the basis of the report, the annexed compendium and the views expressed during this debate in the General Assembly, begin its substantive work at the beginning of 1996.

I wish to offer assurances once again that the Spanish delegation will continue to participate actively in the work of the Working Group and will provide the Chairman with the necessary cooperation so that we can advance towards a consensus in our efforts to reach conclusions that are generally acceptable to Member States.

Ms. Wilmshurst (United Kingdom): We have been discussing the issue of Security Council enlargement in the Open-ended Working Group for two years now. The positions of delegations are well known. The United Kingdom delegation has set out its position in some detail in the Open-ended Working Group. Suffice it for me to say today that we believe that the Council should be enlarged and that this enlargement should be carried out in a way that enhances its effectiveness. On the issue of additional permanent members, it is our very strongly held view, as the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary both made clear earlier in this session, that there are certain countries which, by virtue of their global interests and their contribution to international peace, should be invited to accept the rights and responsibilities of permanent membership. We therefore support German and Japanese permanent membership, for which we believe the case is entirely convincing. We are also strongly of the view that there need to be additional seats for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean

in an enlarged Council. We remain open-minded as to the nature of those additional seats.

As for the cluster II issues of transparency and other matters related to the Security Council, we welcome and have encouraged the steps taken by the Security Council to improve its working methods over the last year — in particular the inauguration of regular briefings by the Presidency of non-members on the work of the Council, the greater openness in the work of the Sanctions Committees and the consolidation of a stronger process of consultation with troop contributors. Some of those steps are derived from ideas raised in the Working Group as well as in the General Assembly more widely. That process of organic evolutionary change should continue. So too, for the moment, should consideration of those issues in the Open-ended Working Group.

The Open-ended Working Group made some useful progress during the course of the forty-ninth session and for that we pay tribute to the President of that session, the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, and to the great industry and perseverance of the representatives of Thailand and Finland, the Co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. Their observations and assessment were particularly useful and should provide an important guide for our work in the Open-ended Working Group when it resumes, which we hope it will do very soon.

The issues are now clear. The discussion on the enlargement of the Security Council has gone on for a long time. We need to make a real effort at this session, under the guidance of the President, to move from discussion to negotiation, and from debate to decisions, in the interest not just of the Security Council but of the reform of the Organization more generally.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): The maintenance of international peace and security remains the major task of this Organization. Changes in the international milieu, now inspired by a wider cooperation, have enabled and facilitated the discussion on the future character of the Security Council.

The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council has provided, and proved itself to be, a worthy forum for a broad-ranging exchange of opinions with the ultimate aim of attaining a convergence of views on these important topics. Much has been discussed. Some very important aspects have been agreed upon. Other key and essential elements still require further discussion.

I join other speakers in thanking the representatives of Finland and Thailand for the sterling work they did last year.

Commenting on the Open-ended Working Group's achievements in their observations and assessment contained in the annex to the report on the Working Group, the Vice-Chairmen state that in their judgement

> "important progress has been achieved during the past two sessions and the groundwork necessary for the reform of the Security Council has been laid".

However, they also note the importance of recognizing that

> "much remains to be done before a comprehensive agreement can be reached among all Member States".

They advise that:

> "In order to arrive at such an agreement the momentum of the work of the Open-ended Working Group must be maintained." (*A/49/965, annex, p. 16*)

The great number of delegations that have asked to speak during this session is indicative of the will of Member States to retain this momentum. Consensus has already been reached on the basic premise inspiring reform, namely, that the Security Council needs to be more representative in nature and reflect better the membership of the Organization in a changed international system.

The Vice-Chairmen stress in their report that

> "Without serious effort to retain this momentum, the status quo would prevail."

They also acknowledge, however, that

> "several delegations do not wish to set any artificial deadlines for the conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group." (*ibid.*)

The crux of the matter remains that of how best to translate the existing consensus on reform into a comprehensive and long-lasting conclusion emerging from the Open-ended Working Group. Various options have been discussed and proposed by Member States. These range from a number of proposals which offer different computations for an increase in the membership of existing categories to those which involve understandings, which take into account the possibility of having some Member States more frequently but not permanently serving on the Council, as in the case of the proposals tabled by Italy and Mexico. Each merits attention and careful consideration.

Such reflection by the general membership should not be construed or interpreted as being a mere repetition of past work and discussion. Whilst it is true that the next phase of work is the process of actual negotiation, are we sufficiently convinced that there exists enough of a broad-based consensus to take us into this phase? Are we agreed on all the relevant principles as yet?

My delegation's impression is that at present we have not reached that stage. That is especially true of the discussions on the question of the future categories of membership of the Security Council. Deliberations on that question are especially delicate. Proposals on different and new categories remain interesting to my delegation.

The ultimate decision on the future character and composition of the Security Council must seek to reflect the reality of an expanded and enlarged General Assembly. The path that is finally adopted should aim at enhancing, rather than diminishing, the existing possibilities of rotation amongst the broadest possible number of Members. It is for this reason that this delegation views with great concern the proposal to lift the restriction on the immediate re-election of Security Council members.

The question of the increase in Security Council membership should not detract our attention from other equally important issues that relate to its present functioning and to the Council's interaction with the rest of the membership. This Organization has been committed to a process of revitalization of its major organs, including the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the only organ in which all Member States are permanent members.

As recently stated during the Commemorative Meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations by my Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Guido de Marco,

> "We believe, and have always maintained, that there has to be a revitalization of the role of the General Assembly. ... In the restructuring of the Security Council, a symbiotic relationship between the Council and the General Assembly is of the essence." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 56)*

Only through the building of a more responsive and immediate relationship between the Assembly and the Security Council can we enhance the contribution of the United Nations universal membership to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Much has already been achieved in rendering the work of the Security Council more transparent. Malta welcomes the practices instituted thus far. These are steps in a worthy direction and examples of the will and commitment to transparency. Practices that go in the direction of greater participation facilitate the work of the Council and the Assembly in ensuring the effectiveness of the Organization.

The Working Group's efforts thus far trace one of the multiple paths of reflection being taken by Member States on the future of the Organization. The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has provided us with an opportunity to renew our commitment to the principles of the Charter. We should indeed take full advantage of the momentum offered by this anniversary and aim for substantial achievements during this session. But such an intent should be encouraging rather than restrictive. It is more of a target and less of a plan. Undue insistence on a rigid time-table can take us off on a tangent and away from that open discussion which has imprinted the work of the Open-ended Working Group thus far.

Our central commitment is to identify a fair and long-lasting reform, a reform that does not detract from the Security Council's present ability and responsibility to perform its duties in accordance with the principles established by the Charter. To that commitment, this delegation pledges its full support.

Mr. Thanarajasingam (Malaysia): At the outset, we wish to acknowledge with appreciation the tireless efforts of the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, Mr. Amara Essy, and his two Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Thailand. The work within this Group has never been easy, given the

importance and complexity of the issues involved. The Group has yet to find the right recipe, the right balance between the impulses of democracy and power politics, as we remain collectively engaged in promoting international peace, security and development.

The question relating to the Security Council has been the subject of intensive debates in this body as well as outside for years. Since the establishment of the Working Group two years ago, the global momentum to make the Security Council representative and to improve its working and decision-making methods has intensified. After two years of meetings, there is consensus to enlarge the membership, a point reflected in the report of this Group. But enlargement or expansion, however great or small, will not by itself resolve the multifaceted problems confronting the Security Council. The Council must be comprehensively restructured and reformed if it is to discharge its Charter-mandated function.

Commenting on the membership of the Security Council, the Malaysian Prime Minister, in his address in the general debate on 29 September 1995, stated, as on other occasions:

> "permanent seats should be given to regions, possibly determined by a regional mechanism". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 12th meeting, p. 4)*

Malaysia maintains that permanent seats should be given to regions, and not on the basis of specific countries. Given the increasingly important role of regionalism and subregionalism within the context of globalism, the composition of a global institution should reflect this important development. The interests of the region, not the interests of individual countries, must be the basis, a concept already embraced by one of the largest regional groups within the United Nations.

Fifty years after the birth of this Organization, we must take steps, if not strides, to veer away from practices that entrench power politics. We need to move towards more representative forms that truly seek to reflect the collective interests of all. Only in this context can there be enduring interests, determined — within the dynamics of the area — by regional and subregional partners. The mechanism, however, would have to be worked out in detail by the respective regions. My delegation looks forward to sharing thoughts on this issue as and when the Working Group reconvenes.

As to the size of the increase, there is no monopoly of wisdom or knowledge over the magic figure. At the end of the day, it is essentially a political decision that must take on board the concerns of all of us, especially those that are already disadvantaged, particularly the developing countries. The Council cannot remain nor become the permanent multilateral abode solely of the rich and powerful.

The question of veto is one of the cardinal issues, as it impinges directly on the decision-making process of the Council. Malaysia has consistently spoken out against the veto power. In his address of 29 September 1995, the Malaysian Prime Minister reaffirmed this position, saying:

> "The veto power should be dropped. Under no circumstances must the Security Council be made an instrument of any one country." *(ibid)*

The veto power negates the principle of sovereign equality, and is anachronistic. While its explicit exercise has declined since the end of the cold war, the threat of its use has often been exploited to prevent the Council from fulfilling its Charter mandate. There would seem to be a correlation between its non-use and the increasing number of informal meetings, often involving select Member States, where decisions are often made.

At the same time, it is evident that those with the veto power would not give their assent to its abolition. Notwithstanding this position, the international community must be relentless in this struggle. We fully support the proposal to define Article 27 of the Charter, which in its current state is ambiguous. Article 27 makes a distinction as to voting procedure between procedural and substantive questions, without, however, defining these terms. According to Goodrich and Hambro, the authors of a book, published in 1949,

> "No article of the Charter has in practice aroused greater controversy than Article 27." (*Charter of the United Nations — Commentary and Documents, p. 220*)

Based on General Assembly resolution 267 (III), adopted in 1949, we believe that the time has come for a serious and in-depth examination of the application of Article 27.

In this regard, my delegation endorses the following specific proposals: firstly, to establish general criteria for

the identification of what are to be considered actions of a procedural nature, as stated in Article 27 (2) of the Charter; secondly, to identify the questions of "vital importance", as stated in resolution 267 (III), where the veto could be applied; and, thirdly, to establish a mechanism that would modify the present voting system, including ensuring that a single vote would not be sufficient to prohibit the overwhelming majority within the Council from making a pronouncement or taking a decision.

While recognizing the difficulties, we believe that the application of the veto could be modified by procedures and understandings that could be developed in the course of our next stage of discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. We hope that the permanent members will be forthcoming and not adopt a dogmatic approach if substantive progress in all aspects is to be made.

My delegation fully subscribes to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, as reflected in its position paper contained in document A/49/965. The paper addresses both issues of expansion and working methods. In response to the universal clamour, including that of the Non-Aligned Movement, to improve its working methods, the Council has introduced some measures. Yet these measures are yet to be institutionalized. We believe that other measures, as suggested by the Non-Aligned Movement, need to be adopted by the Security Council to improve transparency.

One specific area requiring immediate attention pertains to consultations between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries. Although the presidential statement in the Security Council on 4 November 1994 has facilitated some degree of consultation, the process remains ad hoc. The co-chairmanship of the meetings by the President of the Security Council and the Secretariat has been ineffective. It is time for the implementation of Article 44 of the Charter, which invites the Member State concerned

> "to participate in the decisions of the Security Council concerning the employment of contingents of that Member's armed forces".

We wish to underline our disappointment that non-governmental organizations have been prevented from being involved in this Working Group — ironically, often by some of the very delegations which have advocated their involvement in other Working Groups of the General Assembly. The Working Group can benefit from their inputs, and we hope that during the present chairmanship this issue can be resolved.

The credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security depend on the success of this reform exercise. In supporting the Security Council, we must correct its current weaknesses and imbalances. A reformed and restructured Security Council must reflect the realities of our times.

Mr. Laing (Belize): The delegation of Belize fully subscribes to the statement which will be made shortly by the delegation of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community, but which, unfortunately, could not be made earlier.

Since this most recent phase of the debate on the reform of the Security Council began some two years ago, speakers have often focused on the differences between us, sometimes almost with a sense of despair. However, on perusing the recent report of the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group seized of this subject, it is remarkable that a substantial measure of agreement has been reached on a number of topics. This consensus has, in no small measure, been due to the diligent efforts of the Vice-Chairmen, under the guidance and inspiration of the President's distinguished predecessors, Mr. Samuel Insanally and Mr. Amara Essy. We can therefore reflect with satisfaction on the large measure of agreement on the issues relating to the question of the working methods of the Council, particularly the formerly sore topic of transparency. I would suggest that these advances have been quite remarkable.

It is patently clear to this delegation that there is agreement that the Council has to be democratized. In fact, this delegation has not once heard any defence of the contrary proposition during the numerous interventions in this Assembly's general debate, during the Assembly's previous debates on this agenda item, during the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group, or during the recent Special Commemorative Meeting. This might appear to be a victory without substance. But, to understand its significance, we must take into consideration the tremendous growth in the Organization's jurisprudence on the principle of democratization. Over recent years, under the impulsion of our collective efforts, the most undemocratic Governments have accepted, without major demur, the obligation to accord the rights and freedoms of democracy to their peoples. There has been a flowering of elections throughout the planet, all under the banner of democracy. In many places, the United Nations has

overseen the transition to democracy, a topic which we now formally debate during this Assembly's sessions, as we did this morning. A people's right to the free exercise of democracy has possibly now become enshrined as a crucial norm of international law. How could it be otherwise? Democracy is an aspect of the extraordinary edifice of human rights and freedoms which we have so diligently constructed since the Atlantic Charter.

Since no State has challenged the vitality of the doctrine of democracy during this thoroughgoing exercise, it appears to this delegation that there exists agreement on a number of matters. Firstly, we believe that there is broad agreement on reform of the veto, the quintessence of anti-popularism. Other evidence for this conclusion is the silence of a number of major Powers which might otherwise have claimed that this was a reserved domain. With the widespread chorus favouring change, we conclude that there is agreement that the veto will be reformed. Reform will probably take either the form of the specification of particular cases in which the right may be exercised or the requirement of the concurrence, in any putative exercise, of a minimum number of States.

If we are incorrect, we would request those who have different views to let their views be heard. If we are correct, we would agree that the full application of this understanding might await agreement on a package on a number of other issues. Of course, this delegation must acknowledge that those States which now possess the veto might be temporarily exempt from such reform.

There have been many rich contributions to the discussion of the structure of the Security Council. Again, broad agreement can be detected. This delegation believes that there is an overall sense that all five regions of this Organization should be equitably and democratically represented in the permanent membership band of the Council. The differences lie in such details as the number of such members, the methods of their selection and their tenure.

However, if on resumption of the deliberations of the Working Group the President of the General Assembly were to identify consensus on this broad principle, further progress might be facilitated. Of course, my delegation maintains that there must be equity, and that all regions deserve equal representation — two members for each region, which would include four of the existing permanent members. Again, we might have to live with the existing permanent members' continuing to serve and exercise their privileges — temporarily, I should hope.

We have heard a number of delegations recommend that certain, named States should be specially designated permanent members. However, my delegation holds the view that the approach of naming States is incompatible with the overarching premise of democracy. Besides, we are all well aware of the phenomenon of the dissolution of States and of the difficult questions of State succession to which this gives rise. In very recent years, this question has had to be addressed in relation even to a permanent member of the Council. It would be folly to take risks now.

On the other hand, it is clear that there is agreement on a number of the factors that undoubtedly inform the recommendation that particular States, including one of the existing permanent members, should be so specially designated. These factors surely include the following: first, willingness to contribute very significantly to peace and security; secondly, the constitutional and physical ability to contribute to peace and security; and, thirdly, possession of the financial means so to contribute, as evidenced by minimum United Nations budgetary assessments.

Let us, then, enact these or similar or other criteria, rather than discuss named States. It might well be that, on the basis of such criteria, two or three States, including an existing permanent member, would qualify for specially designated permanent membership, over and above the 10 regional permanent members that we propose.

One egregiously undemocratic aspect of this entire question is the fact that the vast majority of States have never served on the Security Council. At present there is a tendency for the Council to be serviced by delegations sufficiently large to enable them to participate in its numerous committees — and frequent world travel is involved. It is clear that, without some novel solutions, this trend will continue.

My delegation again suggests that States be given the option — I repeat: the option — of applying to the regular membership of the Council the modality of sharing a seat on a subregional and neighbourhood or adjacency basis, in the same manner as is currently done in the Global Environment Facility and other financial institutions.

Since 1945, when, for the second or third time this century, the unilateral use of force was outlawed, we have been willing participants in a system of

collectives — including regional — security. In such a system, security is a shared endeavour. It could not be otherwise. The basis for sharing a seat is therefore even more sound in the case of the Council than in the case of financial institutions.

Let me be clear: if we were to do nothing but ensure more adequate participation by the vast majority of unrepresented States, while removing aspects of inequity and lack of democracy, much would be accomplished, and my delegation would be reasonably satisfied. Under the President's wise leadership, we have high hopes for a happy and successful conclusion to these deliberations during this momentous fiftieth anniversary year. I wish you good luck.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): The statement of the Permanent Representative of Colombia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, was faithful to the deliberations and conclusions of the Movement's eleventh summit conference, which was held in Cartagena last October, and it enjoys my delegation's full support.

That statement referred in particular to the need to democratize the United Nations to reflect the universal nature of the Organization and to implement the principle of the sovereign equality of States. It also emphasized the requirements of representativeness and transparency in the Security Council. Similarly, it reaffirmed the overall proposal submitted to the Working Group by the non-aligned countries and the position of principle that it is essential that there be a substantial increase in the proportion of Council members belonging to the Movement. Finally, the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries very appropriately reiterated the position taken by the Movement at its fifth, sixth and tenth summits on the question of the right of veto, which is that they support a reduction in the field of application of the veto, as a step towards its abolition, and ended by mentioning the General Conference to review the United Nations Charter foreseen in Article 109 of the Charter.

This contribution of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was made after completion of the Working Group's report now before us, is particularly important in that it is sufficient in itself to open up, in a serious and responsible manner, the whole problem of a Security Council reform that would respond genuinely to the expectations of the great majority of States Members of the United Nations and enjoy their full support. From that point of view, the position expressed at Cartagena has a clarifying effect that is especially beneficial for the future activities of the Working Group.

Thanks to the solid and laborious discussions that we have had throughout the past year in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, we are today beginning our debate on this item better informed as to the political obstacles accentuated by methodological failings, that prevent us from making a significant breakthrough.

But, whatever one may think of our discussions on this question at the forty-ninth session, we must recognize that the work of the Working Group has now entered a crucial and qualitatively new phase. This development is both promising and fortunate for the credibility and effectiveness of the Working Group as a framework for democratic debate within the United Nations and as an expression of the General Assembly's exercise of its legislative and political functions.

Thus, my delegation, whose positions on all the aspects of this important question have been set forth clearly and in detail, will focus its thinking on the aspects — particularly the methodological aspects — which we regard as the determining ones as the Working Group prepares to enter into discussions at the beginning of next year. That we hope will be decisive for its future and for the success of our efforts.

The Working Group has unquestionably played a catalytic role in an all-inclusive debate which contributed to the maturation of ideas and the emergence of a motivating force for the distillation of concrete proposals, whose wealth and diversity are demonstrated in the compendium published as a working document. But the rather widespread expression of a sincere desire to make the Security Council more effective, more transparent, more legitimate and more democratic are coming up against the fact that this exercise brings together States which are pursuing contradictory — perhaps even irreconcilable — goals.

In addition, there are the legal and institutional limits imposed by the Charter of the United Nations itself. There are also the problems stemming from the incomplete nature of some proposals. In fact, only the Non-Aligned Movement has presented proposals based on a comprehensive approach. Therefore, there is a need for a new *modus operandi* which would channel efforts to

achieve what is possible because it is acceptable to the largest number — rather than continuing to explore ways which inevitably lead to deadlock.

With regard to such a new *modus operandi*, what is required more than ever is transparency in the conduct of debates, promotion of a comprehensive approach to the question of reforming the Security Council, and a quest for consensus in the drafting and formulation of arrangements agreed upon. I wish to specify, with regard to transparency, that my delegation has repeatedly suggested keeping the public in our countries regularly and objectively informed of the progress of our debates, so that the complexity of this exercise will be very clear and no hasty conclusions will be encouraged or drawn.

To be dynamic, the Working Group must also establish a relationship of total trust between the members of the Bureau and the Member States. The Bureau must feel encouraged to fully play its role of reducing differences in viewpoints, in a spirit of complete impartiality. I am pleased, in this context, to pay tribute to President Amara Essy and to our colleagues from Thailand and Finland for the efforts they have made to that end.

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has prompted a quest to restore the Organization to the peoples in whose name the Charter has set forth values, purposes and principles which we must try to promote more than in the past. The frustrations in public opinion are most often linked to impairments in the functioning of the Security Council. Therefore, our common efforts must move resolutely towards a reform which would justify the position of those who believe that the effectiveness of the Security Council goes hand in hand with democratization and legitimacy.

The major challenge today is to build a new system of international relations which is anchored in the original purity of the values, purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and which should be protected from the reflexes, practices and references of the cold war. The Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council will do useful work only if all the participants in it are determined to base their undertaking on this historical perspective.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): The challenge for the Security Council today, after the emergence of a new, cooperative spirit in international relations, is to become fully adjusted to the function the founding fathers of the United Nations expected it to fulfil: to bear the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This is also a challenge for all of us while we again discuss Security Council reform. Increased activities and a broadened spectrum of position-taking and decision-making on behalf of the whole membership underline the importance of the overall legitimacy of the Security Council as the highest political body on the international scene.

In the view of a large majority of Member States, the current structure of the Council does not, however, take into account international changes which have occurred during the last decades, due, *inter alia*, to the process of decolonization and to political and economic developments and realignments. In their opinion, the Security Council, bearing the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, does not adequately reflect the universality of its mandators, that is, the general membership of the Organization. Austria shares this preoccupation.

The Security Council's authority must be strong enough to generate the political will of the broad range of the whole membership of the Organization to carry out its decisions.

The task of maintaining and strengthening this legitimacy of the Security Council, and guaranteeing it by a high degree of representativity and by adequate transparency, constitutes the essential challenge for the Security Council in the future. And we, the Member States represented in the General Assembly, must build the necessary foundations. We must agree on necessary structural changes to enable the Security Council to live up to this challenge.

In this year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we must combine our efforts to ensure that this Organization is well-equipped for the next half century. A reformed Security Council which can rely on universal support will be of vital importance in the decades to come.

Since our debate last year, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, which was established by the forty-eighth General Assembly, has had a dynamic and rich discussion on all issues pertaining to its mandate. In this context, I would like to pay a special tribute to Ambassadors Wilhelm

Breitenstein from Finland and Nitya Pibulsonggram from Thailand for the untiring efforts they have undertaken in their capacity as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. My delegation, like many others, is most grateful for the excellent compendium of observations and assessment they have jointly prepared in document A/49/965, which provides a most detailed insight into the progress made during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

During this year's general debate and, most recently, on the occasion of the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, a significant number of heads of delegation again underlined the urgent need for substantive progress in our work, which should finally culminate in the taking of a political decision on an appropriate reform of the Council. We should take advantage of this high level of interest in the subject and the present dynamism. Aiming first at a more focused debate, we should enter as soon as possible the process of negotiations.

The Austrian delegation, together with a number of other countries, elaborated a discussion paper that was submitted to the Working Group during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Our aim in preparing that paper was to make a constructive contribution to the debate and to highlight possible compromise solutions. The focal points of the Austrian position, reached after in-depth consideration of the numerous other proposals and suggestions presented during the Working Group's deliberations, which are also contained in that document, can be summarized as follows.

First, in our view, the main objective of the reform must be to guarantee a high degree of representativity in the Council and the efficiency and effectiveness of its work. With this in mind, its future enlargement — which, in any case, should not exceed a total of 25 members — has to take full account of the reality and pluralism of today's world and satisfy the need for equitable geographic representation.

Secondly, during the last 50 years the concept of having both permanent and non-permanent members has proved its merits. The necessary continuity of the Council's work and the appropriate reflection of the international power structure were combined with democratic elements, thus ensuring a certain degree of representativity and providing fresh ideas for the solution of upcoming problems. In our view, on the basis of this experience, any future enlargement should take place within the existing categories by preserving as much as possible the present configuration of balance between permanent and non-permanent seats.

Thirdly, the general criteria for the choice of new permanent members must be political and economic realities, the global influence of the potential candidates and their capacity and willingness to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, including through contributions to peace-keeping operations. The principle of equitable geographic representation has to apply.

Fourthly, for the election of non-permanent members — based, again, on the principle of geographic representation — the current criteria listed in Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter should be maintained.

Fifthly, as the deliberations within the Working Group clearly demonstrated, one of the main concerns of delegations is the future voting procedure in the Council, in particular the question of the veto. Austria, along with a significant number of other countries, is of the view that the veto should and could be limited in its scope and use.

The legitimacy of the Security Council not only calls for a higher degree of formalized representativity, but also for increased interaction between the members and non-members of the Council. In our view, it is of the greatest importance that the universal membership be able to understand how political situations are dealt with by the Council. An adequate flow of information towards non-members is extremely helpful in this context and should therefore be continuously facilitated. Certainly, in order to ensure constructive discussions and negotiations, deliberations in closed meetings will remain necessary.

However, a certain balance between privacy and transparency has to be established in order to pave the way for possible feedback on the work of the Council from the international community, as represented in the General Assembly. Delegations with a special interest in particular political situations dealt with in the Security Council should, at an early stage of the decision-making process, have the opportunity to offer their views and provide input. This applies in particular to countries which are politically concerned by a given conflict or which will be economically affected by a future or present sanctions regime, because of, for example, their geographic proximity.

A better exchange of views and information will help increase the confidence of non-members in the Council's work, its credibility and its political authority.

In this context, my delegation wholeheartedly welcomes the significant improvements made by the Council in the last year or so towards better access to information, and we ask all its present and future members to assure an appropriate and consistent follow-up to these initial steps.

Since the discussions on the enlargement of the Security Council meet with well-known difficulties, we are of the opinion that in order to enhance legitimacy of the Council, the immediate need is for greater attention to be given to the cluster II, as contained in the compendium, with a view to strengthening the transparency and the working methods of the Council.

With its long-standing tradition in the area of United Nations peace-keeping, Austria attaches the greatest importance to a prompt and continued flow of information in this context. My delegation would therefore like to emphasize the progress that has already been achieved in this area.

The recent improvements are a result of the proposals and debates held in the framework of the General Assembly's Working Group. We await with great interest its forthcoming meetings, which will, hopefully, provide more ideas on how the working methods of a reformed Council can be further improved. Although some delegations might not wish to set so-called artificial deadlines, let me reiterate that we fully share the Vice-Chairmen's views, expressed in their compendium, that Member States should take full advantage of the momentum offered by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and aim for a substantial achievement in the debate on the reform of the Council during this session.

For this to happen, I submit that we will all have to put narrow national interests back into our files and try to focus on the main goals, which I am sure we all share: how best, in the interest of the international community as a whole, to restructure the Security Council in order to enhance its representativity and legitimacy and at the same time maintain the effectiveness and efficiency of its action.

Mr. Ladsous (France) (*interpretation from French*): We are beginning a third year of discussion on the expansion of the Security Council. After the long months needed to get negotiations under way, positions have recently been stated. The time has come to enter a negotiating phase that would make it possible for us to advance towards the conclusion of this undertaking.

What is most important at this stage is the clarity with which positions are presented. The approach advocated by France is well known and unambiguous and has been stated by the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the French Republic on many occasions.

France favours an increase in the number of members of the Security Council in the two existing categories, and without any changes in their attributions. In our view, this should be accomplished through the inclusion of new partners as permanent members. Germany and Japan seem to us to be fully qualified to join that category, as are some States of the South whose role on the international political scene deserves to be recognized and taken into account. Some new non-permanent seats could also be established in order to improve the geographical representativity of the Council, but this should be done in moderation so as not to cast doubt upon the Council's ability to act effectively and quickly.

Allow me to recall briefly the reasons why this option is in our view the one that would contribute most effectively to strengthening the Security Council while preserving the major checks and balances which have marked the establishment, the life and the success of the Organization for 50 years.

The San Francisco Charter — and the fiftieth anniversary Declaration — has just reminded us that it gives

> "... expression to the common values and aspirations of humankind" *(resolution 50/6, para. 2)* —

conferred on a group of States the permanent seats in the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Some feel that this orientation is a part of past history whose time is over and that since they cannot put an end to the privileges of the permanent members, strengthening or expanding this category of members should be avoided. Those who hold that view thus reject the very principles underlying the Charter. And it goes without saying that France does not share this line of thinking.

On the contrary, it is our opinion that the concept which inspired the Charter has rendered inestimable service to mankind and that it is important, for the future, to strengthen it while adapting it to the new characteristics of the international situation. The number of Member States has of course increased considerably, and that is why it is desirable that this greater diversity in international political life be reflected in a larger number of Council members. Moreover, the number of States that are playing a leading role in the world has also increased and their permanent presence in the Security Council is therefore justified. Hence, we are firmly convinced that the action of the Security Council, and consequently of the United Nations, would be strengthened by recognizing the role played today — side by side with China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — by countries such as Germany and Japan as well as by other great countries belonging to the developing world. This recognition would enable those States to contribute fully to international peace and security. It would therefore contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the Charter.

I should also like to take this opportunity to recall that the Charter designates the permanent members to exercise global responsibilities on behalf of all the Members of the Organization. There is no question of their drawing their legitimacy from any regional mandate whatever. For that reason, in particular, the idea of "regional permanent seats" seems to us to lend itself to controversy. Indeed, we do not think that the idea of semi-permanent members was broadly supported within the Working Group. Moreover, we have reservations as to the idea that the choice of Council members should be removed from the General Assembly and left to the discretion of regional groups. In fact, this idea is not in keeping with the rule that States must be accountable to the entire Assembly for the way in which they carry out their responsibilities.

We must think this matter through and determine which States would benefit from an expansion of the Council. We hope that the conclusion of this process of reflection will be that, without delay, we shall set ourselves the goal of rallying the largest number of delegations possible around a viable formula prior to the start of the next session of the General Assembly.

We know that the President intends to devote all his efforts to this project. We wish him to know that he has our full support and our complete confidence. I take this opportunity also to express to the members of the Bureau of the Working Group, who have enabled us to make such substantial progress in our work, the very sincere gratitude of the French delegation. This gratitude is extended in the first place to Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland, who has been involved in this exercise from the very start, with praiseworthy devotion and impartiality on all points. Our gratitude goes also to Ambassador Chew Tai Soo of Singapore and then to his successor, Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand, who are as worthy of praise as their Co-Chairmen.

I conclude by confirming that the French delegation does not claim any exclusivity in regard to the method to be used and that it is prepared to participate in complete good faith and in a constructive spirit in the negotiations which we are duty-bound to carry out successfully.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): As my Foreign Minister stated in the general debate earlier in the session, the fiftieth anniversary is the most opportune time to engage in self-criticism, to revisit the Charter of the United Nations, to get back to basics, to adapt the United Nations to the new political environment and to make it the real centre of collective security and global solidarity. In this context, and as my delegation has reiterated on numerous occasions, the focus of attention should be the Security Council, which carries the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The central issue before us is the enhancement of the representative character of the Security Council. The new international political environment requires the democratization of the Council. When, on 28 June 1993, we first presented our views on the reform of the Security Council, we referred to the following call by the Secretary-General that we recognize that:

> "the time has come to fulfil the logic of the Charter and pursue not only democratization within States, but democratization throughout the international system ... it also means applying the principles of democratization within the United Nations itself, a goal to which I am committed". *(A/48/264, p. 89)*

We strongly endorse this call. Very recently, after almost three years, the Secretary-General felt the need to re-emphasize it.

The widespread demands that the Security Council be made more representative, democratic, responsive, transparent and accountable should be met. We are strongly in favour of genuine and comprehensive reform. It is with these thoughts in mind that my delegation has

actively participated in the first two years of deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

Having taken note of the report of the Open-ended Working Group contained in document A/49/47 and the compendium contained in document A/49/965, we believe that the next stage of deliberations should be held on the basis of concrete proposals. There are now many useful ideas and proposals before us which necessitate further reflection. But I must underline, once again, that we are against any unnecessary acceleration of the reform process.

There are two main aspects of our work which require equal attention: we have to enhance the representative weight of the Council and to democratize its method of work.

Let me dwell on the first point. The enhancement of the representativity of the Council cannot be confined to a mere numerical expansion of its size. The modalities of the enlargement should also be elaborated. We do not believe that an increase in the overall number of seats will alone suffice to ensure more equitable and representative participation in the work of the Council. The enlargement should be coupled with a fair system of workable rotation. In this context, we firmly believe that the proposal submitted by Italy to the Open-ended Working Group merits careful consideration.

In our position paper of 15 September 1995, contained in document A/49/965, we indicated that the prospective size of the Council should be determined on the basis of the concepts of representativity, democracy, legitimacy, efficiency and effectiveness. We believe that the idea of correlating the size of the Council to its efficiency is inherently misleading.

The underlying determinant of the efficiency of the Council is the support of Member States. The Council could become more effective if it were perceived by the international community as being more equitably representative of the general membership, and thus more authoritative in its decisions. The present dichotomy — a Council that is relatively more efficient in its deliberations, yet less effective in the implementation of its decisions — calls for thorough consideration.

Therefore, in accordance with the view of the majority of Member States, only a Security Council with at least 25 members would be sufficiently representative, as well as more effective and efficient. It should be enlarged by an additional 10 non-permanent members. Thus, the existing ratio of one permanent member to two non-permanent members would be reorganized as one to four. These new, additional seats should be rotated between countries on a predetermined list, the number of which could be fixed between 30 and 40. The countries to be included in the list could be selected according to a set of objective criteria.

The criteria and the list should be flexible so that they could be updated after a certain period of time, that is, there should be a mechanism that would ensure that political and economic changes on the international scene would be regularly reflected in the composition of the Council. The review of the list could be carried out every 12 or 16 years.

This proposal also calls for a new assessment of the concept of constituencies in the distribution of seats in the Council. As stated in our first written proposal, of 28 June 1993, present arrangements for the geographical distribution of the non-permanent seats in the Council, adopted in 1963, are outdated. With the enlargement of the membership, and taking into account the recent changes in the international political landscape, a new approach in this regard, based on the replacement of the current large geographical groups by narrower constituencies, is worth considering. Designation of separate and smaller constituencies would further enhance the representative character of the Council. It would also ensure more equitable and balanced geographical distribution.

The reform of the working methods of the Council constitutes the second dimension of our work. Here, I do not wish to go into detail on this point again. We have explained our views in the Working Group, and we will continue to elaborate on them. However, I would like to emphasize the issue of sanctions. United Nations-imposed sanctions constitute an effective measure for determined action against violators of international law. Nevertheless, there are serious shortcomings which need to be addressed. In this context, we fully endorse the Secretary-General's views on sanctions, particularly his reference to Article 50 of the Charter. He rightly states in his "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace":

> "Sanctions are a measure taken collectively by the United Nations to maintain or restore international peace and security. The costs involved in their application, like other such costs ..., should

> be borne equitably by all Member States and not exclusively by the few who have the misfortune to be neighbours or major economic partners of the target country." (*A/50/60, para. 73*)

In addition to the content of this important observation, the lack of efficient consultation mechanisms and the secrecy of the Council's decision-making process regarding the imposition and review of sanctions are also of concern to the general membership. We are convinced that transparency in the activities of the Council with respect to sanctions will ensure wider support for their implementation.

Our aim should be to make the Open-ended Working Group a genuine driving force for real reform. We have to create a Security Council that is more effective, representative, democratic, transparent, accountable, credible and authoritative. It is a historic task which we must fulfil.

Mr. Butler (Australia): In the solemn Declaration (resolution 50/6) adopted on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we all stated that we

> "Are determined that the United Nations of the future will work with renewed vigour and effectiveness in promoting peace, development, equality and justice and understanding among the peoples of the world"

and that we

> "Will give to the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples in whose name it was established." (*ibid.*)

These are fundamental commitments. They were made in the name of the peoples we represent. They were designed to be of benefit to them.

In addition to enshrining these fundamental commitments, the Declaration addressed specifically the question of change in the Security Council, but it did so in a definite context. No understanding of what was stated specifically would be complete without taking that context into account.

The question of the Security Council of the future was addressed in overarching language which stated:

> "In order to be able to respond effectively to the challenges of the future and the expectations of the United Nations held by peoples around the world, it is essential that the United Nations itself be reformed and modernized." (*Ibid., para. 14*)

I wish to note that these are the terms in which Australia is approaching the questions of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We do not expect, nor do we seek, direct national benefit from this process. We fervently desire the collective, shared benefits of a modernized Council. We have taken part in the process and vigorously pursued a broadly acceptable outcome because we are convinced that it is a necessary condition for the United Nations to be able to do the job expected of it by the peoples in whose name it was established.

In its specifics, the fiftieth anniversary Declaration records two main sets of perceptions about the Security Council of the future: first, the Security Council should, *inter alia*, be expanded and its working methods continued to be reviewed in a way that will further strengthen its capacity and effectiveness, enhance its representative character and improve its working efficiency and transparency; and, secondly, as important differences on key issues continue to exist, further in-depth consideration of these issues is required.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group which we are considering today is testimony to the application and effort that all have made towards advancing our work on this important subject.

The Co-Chairmen deserve our gratitude for their sensitive work and for their integrity, which is all the more remarkable when the uncommon pressures to which they were, and are now being, subjected are considered.

Any judgement of the efforts to date implies the exercise of a basic choice. Simply, we can decide to underline progress or to highlight difficulties. Australia prefers the former.

In our view, considerable progress has been made over the past year. The report, including the compendium, reflects the dynamism of the discussions; the wealth of ideas and proposals; and the areas on which there is a broad measure of agreement and those on which differences continue to exist. In addition, the report reflects important political commitments. These are: the commitment to continue the search for an

outcome that is acceptable to all, and the widespread determination that we should aim to achieve a result as soon as possible.

As we move ahead, we must not lose sight of why this work is important. Reform of the Security Council — the creation of a modern and more effective Security Council — will play an integral role in the process of revitalizing the United Nations.

The Open-ended Working Group must, therefore, continue its mandate. It is the forum in which we can continue to pursue a productive discussion on the range of issues we have to address. This process has been greatly facilitated by the informal consultations that have been held by the Co-Chairmen, and it could well be expanded. Whatever the outcome of such processes, their results must be returned to the General Assembly, and that means first to its Working Group. We strongly recommend that this overall approach be maintained. It has many virtues and, not least, it is relatively resistant to populist oversimplification of what is at stake in, and how we can secure change in, the Security Council.

In considering the Working Group's report, looking to the future and consistent with the approach of emphasizing progress rather than difficulties, there appear to be three issues on which there is a broad measure of agreement. These are, first, that the Security Council must be enlarged; secondly, that two principles should govern that enlargement — that it be made more representative of the overall membership of the United Nations, and that it not be enlarged to a number of members that would reduce its working efficiency, simply because of the size to which it had grown; and, thirdly, that in the forthcoming expansion of the Council the present five permanent members will remain permanent members. Australia agrees to the approaches represented by these three points.

Furthermore, there appear to be a number of issues on which there is a considerable measure of convergence of views, but on which there is perhaps not quite the same measure of agreement as on the three points I have just listed. These measures are: first, expansion of the membership should be balanced in two specific ways. It should be in both the present categories of membership — permanent and non-permanent — and it should create a Council in which there is balanced representation between developed and developing countries, reflecting fully equitable geographical distribution. Secondly, agreement on the expansion of the Council must be decided upon as a whole package, addressing all the issues of an increase in membership, size and balance as a whole.

Australia is broadly in agreement with the two points I have just enumerated, and, for our part, we are firmly of the view, deriving from those points, that Japan and Germany should be accorded permanent seats. But we also recognize the force of the argument that to provide a modern balance in the permanent membership of the Council a small number of developing country Member States from other regions should also be accorded such membership.

If we look ahead on the basis of those three, or five, points, then a fairly clear perspective can be obtained on the issues on which we need to continue to focus more sharply in the future. These are: the method of selection of members of the Council in order to ensure that the criteria of representation of the overall membership and effectiveness of the Council are met; in this context, the question of what kind of amendment of the Charter would be required to bring about a new Council; and, finally, the question of what might best be done, within existing or new categories of membership, to bring about the desired result.

In addition, there is another important issue: methods of decision-making within a new Council. A key question in that context is that of the veto, on which Australia's views have been stated fully in the Working Group.

In conclusion, there should be no doubt that these related issues — the number of permanent members, their representative character and identities, and the use to which their powers are put, including the veto — are keys to agreement on a revised, modern Security Council, as is the fundamental need to produce a Council more representative of the membership of the United Nations as a whole, but of a size that remains efficient.

The debate on this subject has, as the report reflects, been long and detailed, and it is familiar to all of us. Australia's view is that action is required. There is no lack of ideas. What we must now do is seek political consensus on a new Security Council, a Council that will be effective, will represent the whole membership of the United Nations, and will sensibly reflect the realities of today and those visible in the future.

Mr. Kimberg (Denmark): I am speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries — that is, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council remains high on the agenda for reform of the United Nations. The Nordic countries find that the Open-ended Working Group has done very useful work during the past year. We welcome the report presented to the General Assembly, as well as the Vice-Chairmen's observations on and assessment of the progress of the work of the Open-ended Working Group, included in document A/49/965.

The Nordic countries have contributed actively to the debate on this question. I refer, in particular, to the position paper submitted to the Working Group by the Nordic countries in June this year, which is included in the document I have just referred to. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the elements of that paper and to elaborate further on a few of them.

The fundamental objective of an enlargement of the Security Council should be to strengthen its capacity to discharge the duties assigned to it by the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. To achieve this objective, the composition of the Council must better reflect the realities of today's world. Special importance should be attached to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

At the same time, the Council's decision-making efficiency must be retained and its ability to implement its decisions enhanced. In particular, it is important that the veto not weaken the Security Council's ability to play the role assigned to it by the Charter. The question of additional vetoes should therefore be considered in the broader context of decision-making in the Council. The Nordic countries believe that the total size of the Security Council should be in the low twenties, preferably 23. Five new seats could be allocated as permanent seats for qualified States. The aim should be to better reflect present political and economic realities, including better representation for Africa, Latin America and Asia in the Council.

In order to ensure equitable geographical representation, it is also essential to increase the number of non-permanent members. Regional groups should be encouraged to establish equitable systems of rotation for non-permanent members. Such arrangements should remain within the competence of the regional groups themselves. We would also like to emphasize that in the interest of the vast majority of Member States, the ban on the immediate re-election of non-permanent members of the Council should be maintained. We further believe that the question of the composition of the Security Council should be re-examined a suitable period of time after the entry into force of changes resulting from our present consideration.

As to the working methods of the Security Council, the Nordic countries welcome the measures already taken and the practices adopted by the Council to enhance its working methods and make its work more transparent. We think that further steps should be taken to involve the Member States more closely in the work of the Council and that consideration should also be given to formalizing steps already taken. It is particularly important that institutionalized consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries take place when mandates for peace-keeping operations are extended or modified and, whenever possible, with potential troop-contributing countries before a decision is taken by the Council to launch a new operation. With regard to the future work of the Open-ended Working Group, the Nordic countries support the suggestions contained in paragraphs 31 to 33 of the Vice-Chairmen's observations and assessment.

The future Bureau, together with the Secretariat, should analyse the views expressed in the general debate, in the Special Commemorative Meeting and in the debate under this agenda item and submit that analysis to the Working Group. The Bureau should present as soon as possible a programme for the future work of the Working Group and prepare new texts for the Working Group's consideration.

We, the Nordic countries, believe that the time has come to move to the next phase of our work, to enter into a process of actual negotiations. The Working Group should attempt to make substantial progress during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The Nordic countries share the objective, expressed by the two Vice-Chairmen, of crystallizing different ideas and narrowing down differences. Through this approach, a single negotiating text could emerge from the Working Group's discussions, consultations and negotiations.

Successful reform must, in the end, be a result of political will. Nevertheless, adequate resources provided by the Secretariat are a necessary requirement for bringing our work together. Let me assure the Assembly

that the Nordic countries remain dedicated to the further work of the Working Group.

Mr. Muthaura (Kenya): The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is a subject that has engaged the attention of Member States for quite some time now. The interest and active debate that it has generated are proof of Member States' interest and the importance they attach to it. There is general agreement that the Security Council should be reformed to enhance its effectiveness, transparency and accountability and the legitimacy of its decisions.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council has highlighted the areas requiring reform.

There is general consensus on the need to expand the membership of the Council. Kenya is of the view that expansion of the membership on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical distribution and democratization of the Council would be the surest way of meeting expectations. Regions which are currently unrepresented or underrepresented in the permanent-seat category should be favoured in the allocation of new seats in both categories in order to correct the existing imbalance. At the same time, periodic reviews of the permanent membership would be necessary so as to take into account the evolving realities of the world situation.

We appreciate the circumstances that gave rise to the creation of the permanent and non-permanent seats in the Security Council 50 years ago. However, as we have stated in this Assembly in the past, because of the significant and far-reaching changes that have taken place in the arena of international relations, the criteria for selection in both categories of membership need to be re-examined critically to take into account the new realities.

My delegation has previously expressed the view that the Security Council should be expanded to at least 25 members. We still subscribe to this view, as we feel that it is possible to distribute the seats in a fairer way with this number of members and to correct the imbalance that has characterized the Council's membership to date. We are of the view that the current two-year term of office for the non-permanent members of the Security Council has worked well and should therefore be continued. This system, while affording an opportunity for Member States to have a role in discharging the responsibilities that go with membership, also ensures that as many States as possible are given the opportunity to present their candidature for election. The procedure for the nomination of permanent and non-permanent members should be reserved for regional groups, with elections carried out by the Assembly, as has been the practice for the non-permanent seats. At the same time, we are of the view that the length of permanent membership needs to be pegged to a specific term in such a way that periodic reviews are carried out at the end of that fixed term, with the possibility of new permanent members being elected to replace the old ones.

The Charter bestows upon the Security Council, one of the major organs of the United Nations, the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security on behalf of the general membership. This responsibility should be exercised effectively and impartially by the Council on behalf of the general membership, irrespective of whether the threat to peace is directed towards a small or a big State, and whatever the geographical region. In this respect, the Council's decision-making process is of paramount importance. This calls for greater transparency and accountability in the Council's working methods.

We appreciate the measures taken so far by the Security Council with regard to informal consultations with troop-contributing countries in respect of peace-keeping matters. In this regard, it should be recognized that some of the decisions taken to deal with threats to international security in a particular country in any region have far-reaching regional dimensions, which more often than not adversely affect countries neighbouring the one at the centre of the conflict.

In this connection, it is my delegation's view that interested countries should be given ample opportunity for informal and formal consultations with the Security Council to assist the Council in its decision-making process. Almost invariably, the neighbouring countries bear a heavy burden as a result of fall-out of various types from the country of conflict. It is therefore necessary for the Council and the countries thus affected to have consultations with a view to finding effective ways and means of dealing with the situation.

With regard to the veto power, my delegation is of the view that the veto is a negative instrument, which cannot play a useful role in the changed circumstances, characterized by consultation and consensus. It is anachronistic and undemocratic. It is a legacy of the cold war and has now been rendered obsolete.

We should seize the opportunity offered by the fiftieth anniversary to revitalize the Organization and enhance its effectiveness so that it may serve us better in the next millennium. It is my delegation's view that the Security Council has, by and large, proved to be effective in the maintenance of international peace and security. We must not lose the opportunity to revitalize it, make it more democratic, improve its credibility and ensure that it reflects the universality of the Organization.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): It is 6.02 p.m. We have thus heard the last speaker in the debate for today. The remaining speakers will be heard tomorrow. The morning meeting will begin at 10 o'clock.

In this regard I appeal, on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, who will be in the Chair tomorrow, for promptness. Secondly, I appeal to delegations to observe the 10-minute limit on speeches.

Programme of work

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that agenda item 38, entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti", will be taken up on Tuesday, 21 November, in the morning as the second item.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.